



“For He says to  
the snow ‘Fall  
on the earth’  
and to the rain  
shower ‘Be a  
mighty down  
pour.’” -

Job 37:6

## Worship Times

Sunday School

9:00 AM

Worship Service

10:10 AM

## The Folly of Self-Rescue

Paster Cody Schwanger

In one episode of *The Joe Rogan Experience*, Joe Rogan—who, amid the often crude, chaotic, and outrageous conversations that fill his podcast—occasionally stumbles upon moments of surprising wisdom. Rogan is an intelligent and curious thinker, and at times that curiosity leads to unexpectedly profound discussions. One such moment of accidental wisdom, came during his conversation with former Navy SEAL Andy Stumpf, who was describing his time in Antarctica.

He explained how massive crevasses and hidden canyons lie just beneath the snow—gaping chasms that could swallow a person in an instant. As they watched a video of a skier in Antarctica, the man’s GoPro captured him suddenly plunging into one of those snow-covered cracks, hundreds of feet deep. Miraculously, he managed to “self-arrest,” halting his fall and preventing what would have been a certain, frozen death. Rogan asked, “How did he get out?” Stumpf replied, “He probably self-rescued.” Rogan leaned back, exhaling deeply, and said, “*Self-rescue*—that’s a terrifying word.” Stumpf laughed and agreed, “Yeah, but it’s a pretty important skill.”

Rogan’s offhand remark—“self-rescue is a terrifying word”—captures more truth than he may have realized. In the frozen wilderness of Antarctica, a person who falls into a crevasse has only moments to act, and even then, survival depends on forces greater than sheer willpower. The very idea of “self-rescue” exposes the limits of human strength and the fragility of our confidence.

Spiritually, we live much the same way. Our culture prizes independence and self-reliance; we’re taught to believe that, with enough effort, we can climb out of any pit we fall into. This is already a problem in the “physical” world because no one can do life all alone. We need people to help us along the way in all areas of our lives. We need family to fall back on when we incur illness, feeling depressed, experiencing the loss of a job or ones to experience our joys and share them with. We also need those people who push us forward in our careers and more.

So if this sense of cultural independence is a problem in the “physical” world, how much more so is it a problem when we let that mentality seep over into our “Spiritual” lives. You see, sin is a canyon far deeper than ice and snow can carve. No matter how strong our resolve or how disciplined our effort, we cannot pull ourselves back to life. The gospel reminds us that **Christ alone is our rescuer**—the One who descended into the depths to lift us out. Where self-rescue fails, grace begins.

We cannot self-rescue our hearts, nor can we relate to this world or perhaps especially as we relate to God. All this points to Paul as he rights to the Ephesians in chapter 2: 1-10.

*“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”*

In the end, Rogan was right—*self-rescue* really is a terrifying word. It’s terrifying because, whether on the icy continent of Antarctica or in our own souls, it confronts us with the truth that we cannot save ourselves. Yet we still try.

We try to rescue ourselves **spiritually** by working harder, doing better, or striving to earn God’s favor through our own moral performance—making sure we live rigidly obedient to His laws. We try to rescue ourselves **morally** by polishing our image, hiding our faults, or convincing ourselves that we’re “not as bad as others.” And we try to rescue ourselves **emotionally** by chasing distractions, numbing pain with countless devices and vices, or believing that “me time” and weekends away can heal what only grace can truly mend.

But every one of those attempts leaves us dangling deeper in the crevasse—exhausted, disoriented, and still trapped. The gospel breaks into that frozen silence with two simple words: *But God*. “But God, being rich in mercy...” (Ephesians 2:4). He is the One who lowers the rope into our darkness, who takes hold when our strength gives out, and who lifts us into life again.

When we struggle to work through life’s circumstances—our moral failures, financial burdens, illnesses, or crises of faith—things never end well when we try to do it all without God. Faith in Jesus puts our struggles and failures into perspective. It gives purpose to the pain and direction to the uncertainty. When you can’t seem to make ends meet, when you’re battling illness or walking through difficult life changes, or when you’re dealing with a loss of purpose—these things come into focus in light of God’s presence. We can hand over our worries and burdens, allowing Him to carry what we cannot. In doing so, we find that these very challenges draw us closer to Him.

And when you fail morally—when sin leaves you ashamed and heavy-hearted—remember that the grace of Jesus does what you could never do. Let Him remove the boulder of guilt and shame that weighs you down, and experience the freedom found only in Christ.

So when we feel the urge to “self-rescue,” may we remember that the truest rescue has already been accomplished. Christ has descended into our pit and lifted us out by His grace. Our task is not to climb our way to Him, but to trust the One who climbed down to us.

May God bless you in these holiday months.



## CHURCH HISTORY

### 100 Years ago:

1. Springville Congregation met for council in the Mohler House this 14th day of December, 1925 at 12 noon with Elder I.W. Taylor presiding, who read part of I Corinthians 10 followed by prayer by Brother E.M. Dinger.
2. The following brethren were appointed as trustees for our four houses: Mohler House – Joseph Hertzog – 3 years, John Mohler – 2 years, Simon Hertzog – 1 year, Denver House – Amos Heisey – 3 years, Mark Royer – 2 years, M.H. Longenecker – 1 year, Cocalico House – B.B. Burkholder – 3 years, Norman Bollinger – 2 years, Isaac Fahnestock – 1 year, Blainesport House – Jacob Leininger – 3 years, Charles Leininger – 2 years, Joel Fasnacht – 1 year.
3. The report of Church Treasurer John Martzall was as follows: Received plus cash on hand - \$1,591.60, Paid out - \$1,541.02, Balance - \$50.58.
4. It was decided to place a light in the ladies toilet at the Mohler House.
5. Church decided to build a stone road around the Cocalico House.
6. An admonition was given against abusing our new hymnals, especially not to allow little children to spoil them.
7. An admonition given against using chewing gum, especially in the house of God.
8. That we teach and preach against the trend toward worldliness in our members in the line of dress.
9. Sister Emma Becker appeared before the church acknowledging that she used the law without the consent of the church and asked the church for forgiveness. The church forgave her.
10. Brother Harry Keller was admonished for advising Sister Emma Becker to use the law in the case of the acknowledgment made by her in article 12 of these minutes.
11. Brother Jacob Holsinger who moving out of the Springville District has for some reason no certificate. The church decided to work with him.
12. The following Brethren and Sisters and friends were appointed by the Superintendent of the Sunday School and ratified by the church as officers and teachers of the Sunday School for 1926: Brethren Bible Class – Amos Heisey and E.M. Dinger: Sisters Bible Class – Isaac Wenger and J. Bitzer Johns: Young Sisters Bible Class – Annie Keller and Jenny Keller: Men's Advanced Bible Class – John Myer and Howard Kreider: Sisters Advanced Bible Class – D. Mark Royer and John Ebersole: Intermediate Boys – Jacob Leininger and Irvin Graybill: Intermediate Girls – Anna Hertzog and Mazie Graybill: Primary Class- Lida Zug and Emma Heffley: Beginners – Ida Leininger and Annie Mohler: Treasurer – Israel Mohler: Secretaries – Mary Mohler and Grace Dinger: Choristers – Ella Longenecker, Mazie Graybill and John Myer: Librarians – Norman Leininger, Henry Mohler, Donald Royer and Adam Loose.

“Not to know what has been transacted in former times is to be always a child. If no use is made of the labours of past ages, the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge.” ~ Cicero (106-43 BC), Roman politician



The “First Thanksgiving” began in the autumn of 1621 when English Pilgrim Colonists in Plymouth, Massachusetts, celebrated their first successful harvest after a difficult year.

Governor William Bradford organized a three-day feast inviting members of the neighboring Wampanoag tribe, including Chief Massasoit to share the celebration. The event was a harvest festival to express gratitude for the bounty, but it did not become an annual tradition and was not referred to as “Thanksgiving” at that time. It wasn’t until 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving to be a national holiday, establishing a tradition that has evolved to what we celebrate today!



**T**HERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DREAM THAT YOU CAN'T ACHIEVE  
**H**AVE THE COURAGE TO GO AFTER YOUR DREAMS AND BELIEVE  
**A**LWAYS REMEMBER YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL AND UNIQUE  
**N**EVER GIVE UP WHEN GOING AFTER WHAT YOU SEEK  
**K**EEP REMINDERS AROUND TO REMIND YOU OF YOUR DREAMS  
**S**AVOR THE PRESENT FOR IT GOES QUICKER THAN IT SEEMS  
**G**IVE MORE TO OTHERS THAN YOU RECEIVE  
**I**NSPIRE OTHERS WITH ALL THAT YOU ACHIEVE  
**V**ALUE YOURSELF; YOU ARE PERFECT FOR YOU  
**I**NDIVIDUALITY IS IMPORTANT SO LET IT SHINE THROUGH  
**N**OTICE THE SMALL MIRACLES ALL AROUND YOU  
**G**REATNESS STARTS FROM WITHIN AND IS IN ALL THAT YOU DO

Hello  
Perfect



"As we celebrate Christmas, let's remember the true reason for the season — the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amid the lights, gifts, and gatherings, may our hearts be centered on His love, peace, and the hope He brings to the world."

**Gratitude** – Taking time to reflect on blessings and express thanks to God and others for the good things in life.

**Family and Fellowship** – Gathering with loved ones to share food, laughter, and memories strengthens relationships and community.

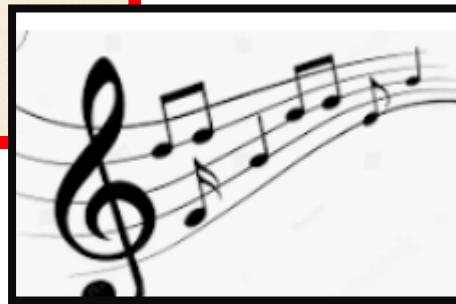
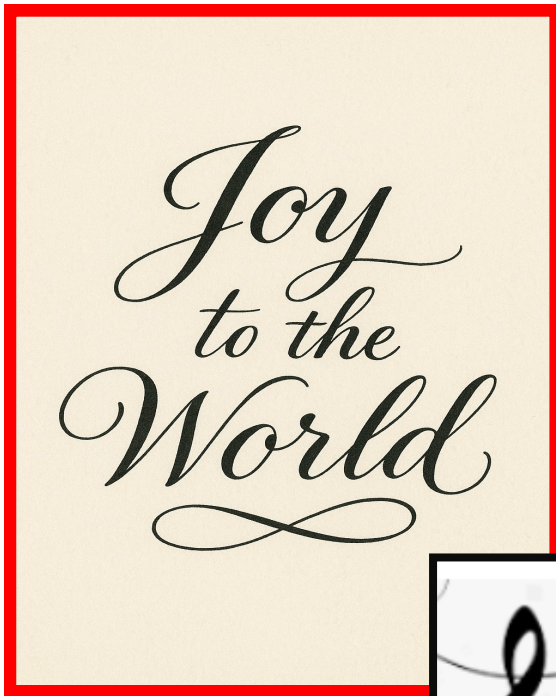
**Generosity** – Giving to those in need through food drives, volunteering, or simple acts of kindness spreads the spirit of thankfulness.

**Traditions** – Enjoying familiar customs like shared meals and prayers of thanks.

**Faith and Reflection** – Remembering God's provision and goodness inspires deeper appreciation and contentment in every season.

- **C** - The Christ Child, born in Bethlehem
- **H** - The Heavenly Father sent His Son
- **R** - Our Redemption plan brought by His birth
- **I** - Intercession for our sins from Christ, our King
- **S** - Savior, sent to save us all
- **T** - Telling of God's love and grace
- **M** - Messiah, the promised son
- **A** - All for the glory of God
- **S** - Spreading peace and joy to the





The Nativity of Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world to bring hope, peace, and salvation to all people. According to the Bible, Jesus was born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph. Because there was no room at the inn, He was laid in a manger, surrounded by humble shepherds who were guided there by angels announcing the good news. Wise men from the East also followed a bright star to bring gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Nativity reminds us of God's great love and the humble beginnings of our Savior, whose birth brought light into a dark world and

